

## Petra Schulz\*, Ira Gawlitzek and Angelika Wöllstein

# Introduction

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We are pleased to present to the readers of the *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* a Special Issue in honor of Rosemarie Tracy. We hereby recognize Rosemarie Tracy's important contributions to linguistic research as well as her talent for making linguistic insights and their significance available to an audience that extends beyond academia. Rosemarie Tracy has served the field of linguistics in several professional roles, *i.a.* between 2003 and 2006 as head of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sprachwissenschaft* (DGfS, German Linguistic Society). Accordingly there can be no better place than a special issue of the ZS and a selection of contributions from the field to reflect on Rosemarie Tracy's academic career landmarks and her varied linguistic achievements.

Rosemarie Tracy studied English, French, and Psychology in Mannheim, Göttingen, and at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania. In 1991 she obtained her PhD in Göttingen with a dissertation on first language acquisition for which she collected and analyzed a rich corpus of longitudinal spontaneous speech data.

Trees and their parts have figured prominently in Rosemarie Tracy's academic life. Having been nurtured by her PhD supervisor Thomas Gardner (Göttingen) – much like his lemon trees, as she writes in the introduction to her book 1991 – she developed a strong interest in the question of how children deal with the task of integrating diverse and often contradictory types of input. Rather than trying to identify “ideal” clear-cut stages, her main focus has been on “times of ‘turbulence’ and conflict during which children are led to restructure their systems”, as stated in a paper that she presented at the Child Language Seminar in 1987.

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Her own academic tree has grown impressively, becoming strong enough to be climbed on (*Who climbs the grammar-tree?*, 1992), with multiple roots (*Growing (clausal) roots ...*, 2002), and producing a rich harvest. Her contributions include countless publications and invited key note presentations, involvement in many research projects, and the fulfillment of numerous academic and public functions, among them member and head of the DFG-Fachkollegium Sprachwissenschaft (from 2008 until 2015). Her interest in language acquisition and in grammar has been a constant in her academic life. What changed are the acquisition types and the aspects of grammar through which to find answers to fundamental questions regarding the nature of the linguistic system and how learners discover it.

After completing her PhD Rosemarie Tracy spent several years at the University of Tübingen – a period during which she became a teacher and a mentor for the three editors of this volume. She was awarded a DFG research project on complex syntax that was part of the DFG *Schwerpunkt* program on first language acquisition; some of the contributors to this volume were involved in this *Schwerpunkt* program as well.

**Natascha Müller's** paper *Different sources of delay and acceleration in early child bilingualism* opens this volume and takes up the concept of bilingual bootstrapping, an idea developed in Gawlitzek-Maiwald and Tracy (1996). Integrating her previous work and empirical findings, Müller argues that two effects are at work in bilingual first language acquisition – delay and acceleration – and that they can be attributed to different sources. She holds that delay is a possible consequence of cross-linguistic influence on the level of competence or performance, which is due to the burden of processing two languages. Acceleration, on the other hand, is argued to be always rooted in efficient computation in a non-linguistic sense.

During Rosemarie Tracy's time in Tübingen, lively and fruitful exchanges of ideas emerged with the linguists in Stuttgart, among them Hubert Haider. **Hubert Haider, Christina Schörghofer-Essl and Karin Seethaler's** paper *Quantifying kids prefer intersecting sets – a pilot study* explores a new account for the well-known finding that preschool children have difficulty understanding sentences such as *Every boy walks with a balloon*, involving an existentially quantified object NP in the scope of a universally quantified subject NP. In an experimental study, the authors tested whether children also fail with truth-conditionally equivalent sentences such as *No boy walks without a balloon*, with a negated existential quantifier plus a negated predicate. They found that 4- to 6-year-old German speaking children performed better on the negated sentences and conclude that the primary source of the difficulties lies in the acquisi-

tion of a special aspect of compositional semantics, more specifically set inclusion compared to set intersection.

In Tübingen, Rosemarie Tracy's research interests broadened to include multilingualism in adults and in children. The former she pursued in close collaboration with her late colleague and friend Elsa Lattey; the latter she investigated in a further DFG project on bilingual first language acquisition that formed the basis of her habilitation in 1995. In the same year, Rosemarie accepted a professorship for English Linguistics at the English Department of the University of Mannheim, where she started modern linguistics, taught countless students and infused many of them with enthusiasm for linguistics and language. She developed a strong interest in early second language acquisition and the question of how children with German as their second language can be supported to acquire German early and well enough to be able to live up to their individual potential in the educational system. This interest led to writing a book for the general public on how children learn to speak and how we can help them (*Wie Kinder Sprachen lernen*, 2007), which quickly became very popular among educators, parents, and students. It also led to the development of LiSe-DaZ®, the first language test with a norm for young second language learners of German, which she developed together with Petra Schulz.

**Petra Schulz and Rabea Schwarze's** contribution *How robust is the ban on nonfinite verbs in V2? Evidence from early second language learners of German with and without SLI* focuses on the relation between verb placement and verbal inflectional morphology. Using elicited production data from LiSe-DaZ in a longitudinal design, they investigated whether eL2 children obey the ban on non-finite verbs in verb-second position in German, and whether eL2 SLI children differ from their eL2 TD peers. While *en*-infinitives were restricted to verbfinal position, bare verb forms occurred in V2 only and are argued to be finite. The authors conclude that the restrictions for morphological markings are inextricably tied to specific syntactic positions, that this knowledge is still accessible when L2 acquisition starts around age 3, and that the ban on non-finite verbs in V2 is invulnerable in eL2 TD and in SLI, indicating that SLI is a matter of severe delay.

Rosemarie Tracy's collaboration with Monika Rothweiler goes back to Tübingen; a time when the acquisition of complex sentences and mastery of verb inflection was the subject of much debate. In their contribution *Subject-verb agreement in German in bilingual children with and without SLI*, **Monika Rothweiler, Manuela Schönenberger** and **Franziska Sterner** investigate the acquisition of subject-verb agreement (SVA) in German based on an analysis of spontaneous speech data from TD and SLI children learning German as child L2 (cL2) and from monolingual children with SLI. Their aim was to determine

whether cL2 TD children, like children with SLI, have difficulties with SVA. The authors found that the unimpaired cL2 learners had indeed successfully acquired SVA, while neither the monolingual nor the bilingual children with SLI succeeded in reliably producing correct SVA.

Rosemarie established two very successful lines of research at the University of Mannheim: Investigating fundamental questions of language acquisition and multilingualism as well as developing concepts for language support in schools and kindergartens. Both lines of research are reflected in the numerous projects and collaborations, including the founding of MAZEM gGmbH together with Holger Hopp and Dieter Thoma, the Mannheim center for multilingualism. Fruitful cooperation extended well beyond Mannheim, such as the frequent exchanges with Maria Polinsky (University of Maryland) and with Artemis Alexiadou (HU Berlin).

In his contribution *The processing of English which-questions in adult L2 learners: Effects of L1 transfer and proficiency* **Holger Hopp** reports on a comprehension study involving visual-world eye-tracking and off-line comprehension measures of subject and object *which*-questions in German adult learners of English at various stages of proficiency. Starting from the finding that monolingual English children initially show a strong subject preference for subject and object *which*-questions, Hopp investigates whether adult learners follow the same acquisitional trajectories as monolingual English children or whether there is L1 transfer, resulting in a different development. While the off-line accuracy data show strong effects of proficiency, the eye movement data shows that all groups of L2 adults make incremental use of inflectional cues in on-line comprehension. These findings indicate that inflectional cues are integrated in the course of L2 development in ways resembling monolingual development.

**Oksana Laleko and Maria Polinsky's contribution** *Silence is difficult: On missing elements in bilingual grammars* focuses on difficulties near-native speakers (heritage speakers and adult second language learners) experience in interpreting and producing linguistic constructions that contain morphologically null elements. The authors expand the understanding of this so-called Silent Problem by showing that the range of the problem extends well beyond the grammar of null pronominals. They argue that the various manifestations of the Silent Problem follow from a typical aspect of near-native grammars: difficulty in recovering missing elements that have discourse antecedents. Their results show that the two speaker populations differ in their evaluation of zero-marked forms in contrastive contexts.

In her paper *Building verbs in language mixing varieties* **Artemis Alexiadou** focuses on bilingual speakers and discusses two patterns of language mixing that involve verbal predicates, the so-called light verb construction and the so-

called affixal pattern. The empirical aspect of the study concentrates on Greek-German and Cypriot Greek-English varieties, which are compared to the Spanish-German variety investigated in previous research. The author proposes an analysis of the language mixing structures using the tools of Distributed Morphology and Minimalist Syntax. The author concludes that bilingual speakers have very detailed knowledge of fine properties of their two linguistic systems that become apparent in the context of building verbs.

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